

Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

DCS Communications Office

November 5, 2004

The Week Ahead

- The Commissioner will be on vacation through November 14.

Note from the PIO

We are working to feature DCS employee accomplishments, promotions and retirements in the Weekly Wrap Up regularly. To facilitate in this process, we need your help. Please e-mail any information related to professional milestones and achievements to public information officer K. Danielle Edwards at K.Danielle.Edwards@state.tn.us.

Upper Cumberland Drug Court Planning Team attends federal training

The Upper Cumberland Drug Court Planning Team recently attended a training session in Boston, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Administration and the Drug Court Planning Initiative. Attending this training allows eligible entities to apply for federal funding to continue the Upper Cumberland Juvenile Drug Court that has been active for over two years in Putnam, Overton, White, Jackson, Cumberland, Pickett, Dekalb, Van Buren and Clay counties.

A juvenile drug court program provides supervised probation services and alcohol and drug treatment to non-violent youth enrolled in the program. A team consisting of the drug court coordinator, school personnel, district attorney, public defender, treatment provider, police officer, probation provider and court staff develop the plan and closely monitor the youth's progress in the program through frequent drug screenings, team meetings and court appearances.

The Upper Cumberland Drug Court program is administered by the Upper Cumberland Community Services Agency in partnership with juvenile courts, schools, the district attorney, the public defender and other community agencies. Since the program's inception in October 2002, 34 youths have successfully completed the Upper Cumberland Drug Court Program, with an average success rate of 71 percent, substantially higher than the national average of 60 percent. The Upper Cumberland Juvenile Drug Court program is funded by a juvenile accountability block grant through the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.



Back row: General Sessions Judge Nolan Goolsby, Putnam County Court; Ken Sircy, Cookeville City Police; Greg Bowman, Putnam County Court Youth Services Officer; Tammy Holmes, Upper Cumberland Community Services Agency; Greg Lewis, Volunteer Behavioral Health; David Brady, Public Defender. **Front row:** Cheri Richards, Upper Cumberland Community Services Agency; Vikki Thomas, Advocacy and Resources Corporation; Paula King, Putnam County Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinator.

On the Path to Excellence

Submitted by Bonnie Hommrich, Deputy Commissioner of Protection and Prevention

Snowflakes are frail, but if enough of them stick together, they can stop traffic.

- Vance Hauser

In late August, the federal court approved the Path to Excellence. For much of DCS's staff, it was a significant step in the agency's ongoing commitment to improve outcomes for families and children.

Progress to date on some elements of the Path to Excellence include the following:

1. Leadership and Management

- The Committee on Multicultural Affairs, a standing (permanent) committee of DCS, met for the first time Sept. 29-30.
- The committee's objective is to develop a plan to improve cultural competency in the department.

- The committee consists of 24 members who are DCS staff, CSA staff and former participants in the child welfare system. Members represent social services, juvenile justice and all 12 regions.

2. Recruitment and Development of a Diverse and Qualified Workforce

- Case Manager Certification Training has been rolled out in three phases. Phase I included selected supervisors, Team Leaders and Team Coordinators to review and provide feedback about the curriculum. Phase II included supervisors who had new hires and would also provide feedback on the curriculum. Phase III included the first group of new case managers who have completed the training.
- Over 100 employees have participated in the Case Manager Certification Training.
- Twelve one-day sessions of the Case Manager Certification Curriculum have been scheduled for supervisors. Eight of these sessions have occurred. All remaining sessions will be completed by the second week of November.

3. Child and Family Team Meetings

- DCS Regional Office staff and other community partners have been developing region-specific plans for implementing the Path to Excellence. Each region now must draft plans to address the following issues:
- ***Recruitment and Retention:***
Recruiting and retaining resource parents who are able to meet the diverse needs of children and families the department serves.
- ***Backlog Review:***
Ensuring that all children, especially those who have been in custody for more than one year, are becoming members of families.
- ***Child and Family Team Meetings:***
Engaging family and community members in decision-making for children with whom they are connected.
- ***One Worker – One Child:***
Ensuring that children have one person working with them until they are able to return to their own families or until a new family is created.
- The next step in plan development focuses on integrating the CQI process into these efforts through defining measurable goals and ensuring that the plans are outcome-based.

4. Child Protective Services

- Since April 2004, overdue CPS investigations have been reduced by 67 percent.
- Structured Decision Making Training is scheduled for late November. DCS will begin rolling out Structured Decision Making on Dec. 1 in the Upper Cumberland and Southwest regions.
- Debbie Waddell has been hired as the Director of Prevention. She will begin with a focus on CSA roles.

5. Placement Process

- Dr. Christopher Bellonci, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, has been hired as a consultant to help implement the protection from harm policies (relating to informed consent, psychotropic medication, restraint and seclusion).
- Implementation of a psychotropic medication-tracking database has begun, and will be converted to a Web-based system to enhance tracking and monitoring capabilities. This tracking mechanism will be implemented in TNKids in the May 2005 build.
- Training has been conducted on the new protection from harm policies in four regional meetings attended by over 60 agencies and staff from all regions of DCS and CSAs.
- Contract providers have completed self-assessments regarding their level of compliance with the new protection from harm policies, and providers not in full compliance are in the process of submitting corrective action plans for review and follow-up monitoring.
- Two nurses have been hired for the Medical and Behavioral Services Division in Central Office to assist in medication monitoring, training and support to the regions.
- A formal job description for a child and adolescent psychiatrist has been developed and DCS is in the process of recruiting a full-time psychiatrist for the department.

6. Foster, Kinship and Adoptive Home Development and Support

Resource Parent Advocacy, Mentoring and Support:

- DCS Central Office and Regional Office staff are partnering with 15 resource parents representing rural and urban areas of our state to ensure that mentoring, coaching and advocacy is made available by resource parents for other resource parents.
- They are drafting a statewide proposal for January 2005. The next steps are to convene focus groups in each of the 12 regions during th January and February for feedback and discussion of the proposal.

Recruitment and Retention:

- Identified 12 regional recruitment resource staff to work collaboratively with Central Office to ensure the dissemination of information **all** staff within their regions
- Provided region-specific data regarding the number of resource homes and placement children.
- Identifying strategies for coordinated pre-service and in-service between private providers and DCS.

7. Resource Development

- Budget staff has begun work both internally and with the assistance of Norm Zimlich to address funding opportunities.

8. Quality Assurance

- QA facilitated a retreat with representatives from all 12 regions to kick off the Continuous Quality Improvement process with DCS.
- QA conducted Regional specific CQI meeting in all twelve regions.

- DCS is working with Chapin Hall of the University of Chicago to develop a methodology to track outcomes related to the children in our custody.
- Chapin Hall will be using TNKids data to track outcomes and develop a subjective measure to provide a comprehensive view of the agency.

Much of the work of the Path to Excellence has been based on some core beliefs about DCS. They include:

1. Focusing on building on strengths – experiment, reconsider and re-combine in new ways what we know about “best practices” to achieve superior outcomes.
2. Committing to sustained series of successful changes – facilitate the growth and development of a culture of continuous quality improvement.
3. Act with a sense of urgency. Why urgency? Because DCS has a major effect on the safety, permanency and well being of children and families in Tennessee. What could be more important?

For more information, contact Eric J. Henderson at Eric.J.Henderson@state.tn.us.

CORE Leadership

CORE Leadership Meeting Ken Sanders, Presiding October 26, 2004

- **Overtime**

Joe Cimino discussed Quarterly Overtime Report. The Commissioner stated that overtime expenditures must be addressed. Our goal is to reduce overtime by 35 percent in order to get to FY '03 level in overtime expenditures. The Commissioner stated employees cannot work off the clock, nor can their supervisors say “no” overtime. The Overtime Report will be sent by Fiscal once a month to the RAs. RAs are going to have to analyze why overtime is occurring and manage it. Judy Cole will discuss Overtime Report with RAs during RA conference call on Fri., Oct. 29. A plan will be discussed and action steps developed to be reported to CLT next Tue., Nov. 2.

Budget

FY '03

FY '04

FY '05

Overtime

\$6.0 Million

\$7.9 Million

\$9.2 Million

Joe requested that program directors and IS attend the polycom budget meetings on Monday at 2:30 p.m. The Executive Directors will rotate attendance at these meetings.

The Commissioner introduced Norm Zimlich to the Core Leadership Team. He is a consultant who was identified in the Path to Excellence to assist with revenue maximization. He also has experience in rate setting process with private providers.

- **TennCare CQI**

Mary Beth Franklyn reviewed the action plans on the TennCare CQI Plan.

- **DCS CQI**

Paul Montebello and Daryl Chansuthus went over the Draft of QA and CQI Plan. The development of the QA/CQI system assesses performance quality and impact on an ongoing basis. It provides state and regional accountability, development of regional CQI plans, measures, tracks and monitors regions on an ongoing basis, and facilitates the state's efforts in meeting the goals of the federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

The plan addresses three questions:

1. Are we achieving our goals?
2. How can we improve to better serve our children, partner with their families, and collaborate with our community stakeholders, which will ultimately bring us closer to our goals?
3. Have we succeeded in meeting our improvement expectations?

The initial focus for improvement in the 12 DCS regions will be on four critical outcome areas:

- Time to reunification
- Time to adoption
- Likelihood of re-entry
- Placement stability

Bonnie said that we need to have our case file review form completed and begin reviewing case files in January. The Commissioner stated that we need to have consistent filing and the charts should look the same.

CRI, as well as the TAC, will be here in late November to review the Path to Excellence. Next week, Paul and Daryl will do a rehearsal of the QA/CQI plan with Core Leadership in preparation of the TAC and CRI meeting. The Core Leadership Team is expected to read the CQI Manual and QA/CQI Plan. The Commissioner stated that everyone will be on a CQI team.

New Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Rates

Submitted by Elizabeth Black, Executive Director, Office of Child Permanency

The Department of Children's Services has announced the following increases for adoption assistance and foster care, effective Nov. 1, 2004. With these changes, we are making progressive steps toward the median income levels of the USDA cost of living in the urban South. The following rates include food, shelter, clothing, transportation and other miscellaneous expenses.

Please share this information with all adoption, kinship and foster care staff immediately.

Regular Board Rates

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Foster Care</u>	<u>Adoption Assistance*</u>
Ages 0-11 years	\$16.57 per day	\$16.52 per day
Ages 12 and up	\$19.08 per day	\$19.03 per day

Special Circumstances Board Rates

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Foster Care</u>	<u>Adoption Assistance*</u>
Ages 0-11 years	\$18.60 per day	\$18.55 per day
Ages 12 and up	\$20.99 per day	\$20.94 per day

Extraordinary Board Rates (formerly known as negotiated in foster care)

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Foster Care</u>	<u>Adoption Assistance*</u>
All Ages Level 1	\$35.00 per day	\$34.95 per day
All Ages Level 2	\$65.00 per day	\$64.95 per day
All Ages Level 3	\$95.00 per day	\$94.95 per day
All Ages Level 4	\$130.00 per day	\$129.95 per day

***Please note that these adoption assistance rates apply to contracts executed on 11-1-04 and thereafter. All pre-existing adoption assistance rates will be increased by two percent.**

The old MR rates have been abolished; they will be converted to Extraordinary Board Rates Level 1. Emergency board rate remains at \$50.00 per night (FC600), with a maximum of three nights. There are no sibling bonuses, effective Nov. 1, 2004.

It is very important that staff remember to enter all outstanding contracts on the old rates and confirm the existing contracts correctly, so that the foster parents can phone in and verify accordingly. It will not be necessary for staff to end the contracts at the old rate and enter new contracts, as we will complete a mass update to the system. ChiPFinS will take care of that.

Remember, there must be a paper contract matching each board payment entered into ChiPFinS, including termination dates. This time we will have a new placement contract on the server, so please remember to use the new form for your contracts.

If you need assistance in any area relative to the board rates, please contact Patsy D. Napier at 615-532-5615 or email at patsy.napier@state.tn.us

Continuous Quality Improvement: CQI Basics

Submitted by Daryl Chansuthus, Director, Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement

Many books have been written describing the philosophy and methods used in the quality movement. Included here is a brief overview of quality management principles espoused by W. Edwards Deming, the pioneer of quality.

Deming began working in Japan in 1950 and was instrumental in building the Japanese industry into an economic world power.¹ The Malcolm Baldrige Award given by the U.S. government for quality excellence is modeled after Japan's Deming Prize, the highest industrial award given in Japan. Deming held a strongly humanistic philosophy that was based on the idea that problems in a production process are due to flaws in the design of the system, as opposed to being rooted in the motivation or professional commitment of the workforce. Under Deming's approach, quality is maintained and improved when leaders, managers and the workforce understand and commit to constant customer satisfaction through continuous quality improvement.

Deming and his colleague, Shewhart, promoted the PDCA cycle: **Plan, Do, Check** and **Act**. In this cycle, employees **PLAN** to implement a policy to improve quality and/or decrease the cost of providing services. After the plan is developed, employees **DO** it by putting the plan into action and then **CHECK** to see if the plan has worked. Finally, employees **ACT** either to stabilize the improvement that occurred or to determine what went wrong if the gains planned for did not materialize. PDCA is a continuous cycle; any improvement realized by carrying out one PDCA cycle will become the baseline for an improvement target on the next cycle. Thus, the process of improvement is never-ending.

¹ Information on Deming's approach has been adapted from Out of the Crisis (Deming, 1986)



Human beings are the only creatures who allow their children to come back home.

- Bill Cosby

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead

Where is there dignity unless there is honesty?

- Cicero
